

**TOWN OF ASHBURNHAM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
JANUARY 2, 2007
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE, TOWN HALL**

This meeting was aired live on local cable television Channel 8.

PRESENT: Jonathan Dennehy, Chair, Mark Carlisle, Member, Chris Gagnon, Clerk, Kevin Paicos, Town Administrator, Bill Johnson, Chair Advisory Board and Sylvia Turcotte, Assistant to the Town Administrator.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Dennehy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and read the agenda. Carlisle moved to accept the agenda and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Dennehy stated he wanted to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from Dave Sargent, the Chair of the Town Hall Renovation Committee advising the Selectmen that the Committee has voted to ask them to take over the responsibility of finding a home for the Town Hall staff.

1. REVIEW OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT ARTICLES

Dennehy noted that the Board received a memo from Kevin Paicos with his proposed Special Town Meeting Schedule and proceeded to read the dates. (Copy attached.)

The date of the Special Town Meeting was questioned and it was decided to stay with Wednesday, January 24th.

Carlisle motioned to open the Special Town Meeting warrant and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Carlisle then motioned to hold the Special Town Meeting upstairs at Town Hall on Wednesday, January 24th at 7:00 p.m. and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

A motion was then made by Carlisle to close the Special Town Meeting warrant at noon on Friday, January 5th. Gagnon seconded and the motion carried.

Paicos wanted to announce that Waste Management was not closing the transfer station. He stated that Chris Gagnon helped to get them to keep it open until we get our permit in the spring. He added that we would issue an RFP at that time. He noted that Waste Management would be distributing a list of price changes at the Transfer Station on Saturday. Paicos also stated that they were happy to stay as they would be able to raise their prices. Paicos noted that this is temporary until we go out to bid in the spring. Gagnon stated that we have to decide whether it will be municipal or thru a private contractor before we file our application. He also stated that the Board is working on fixing it permanently and Dennehy added that they are responding to all the concerns.

At this point, the discussion turned to the STM warrant articles. (Draft warrant is attached.)

Dennehy noted that *Article 1* is not a customary article. He stated that this is only done in extreme circumstances mid-year. He inquired about a reserve fund transfer. Paicos stated that the Reserve Fund only has \$50k in it at this time and added that he really didn't want to ask for a transfer from this fund so early in the year.

Paicos stated that the Town Clerk and Land Use departments would definitely require transfers.

Dennehy wanted to know when the Advisory Board was going to vote on the warrant and Paicos stated that once it's edited and added that if a quorum can attend on Monday it could be posted as a joint meeting with the Selectmen.

Dennehy noted that in his opinion it is not a good precedent to put an article for more funds at a Special Town Meeting and he added that he feels it should have been budgeted. Paicos responded by stating that he would only give the Board a list of 3 or 4 departments that really need this but added that he would prefer not to touch the Reserve Fund. Bill Johnson agreed with this and added that a joint meeting on the 8th is a good idea.

Dennehy stated that joint meetings are very productive and Johnson noted that he would check with the other Advisory Board members as to their availability.

It was decided unanimously that both Boards would wait until the next meeting to see what Paicos would recommend.

Paicos noted that *Article 2* would be taken out of the warrant. Paicos stated that *Article 3* is to appropriate debt service and noted no impact on the taxes would result. Gagnon stated that he wanted the wording to be changed to "Oakmont-Overlook Regional School Renovation Project" and noted that this was for the track/field.

Article 4 was explained by Paicos. He stated that item 1-tank level monitoring telemetry and item 2-Gardner Hill Water tank fencing were both mandated by Homeland Security. He added that item 3 was suggested by the Water Commissioners at a total of \$25,161 and item 4 was part of the Page Beach project.

Paicos stated that *Articles 5 and 6* were both deleted as this is not ready to go before the voters at this time.

Paicos stated that *Article 7* could be approximately \$45k, which would be the Town's portion of the construction on Route 12, the 21J Project, and is made up of mainly police detail expense.

Paicos then stated that *Article 8* was not needed but that it could be a political statement. Gagnon stated that they have to get this passed before the budgets are set and Dennehy noted that this article should be left on the warrant. Gagnon added that this would clarify the capital debt exclusion which is a one-year debt exclusion.

Article 9 was deleted. Gagnon noted that *Article 10* is needed to move forward with the planning and that it should read as requested by the Briggs Building Committee. Paicos stated that this would be for both Tier I and Tier II and that they want to get this done now.

Paicos noted that *Article 11* many not be needed yet. He added that if the Nextel tower is approved then we would provide material and they would put it up for free so this would be needed.

Paicos noted that *Article 12* according to what the legislature stated, if done this way, this would be approved. Carlisle stated that he was for this change and Paicos added that Town Counsel thought this was a great idea.

Paicos noted that on *Article 13*, we have a \$10k grant with a deadline of the end of the month. He also noted that if we don't get the grant, we won't spend the money.

Dennehy asked about the difference of an historic area versus an historic district. Paicos stated that they would invite Christina Sargent to attend Monday night's meeting to explain this for the Board.

Dennehy noted that *Article 14* is the whole reason why we're having this Special Town Meeting so quickly and that this is a similar process as Bush Hill. Gary Howland was present and noted that they have 2 sources of funding and that "the National Park Service, the United States Department of the Interior" should be deleted from this article.

Paicos noted that *Article 15* is to reimburse the Conservation fund.

Paicos stated that *Article 16* is to fix a technical flaw in the Non-Union Personnel By-Laws.

Dennehy stated that *Article 17* is a housekeeping article. Paicos noted that *Article 18* may not be needed and he would get a definitive answer on this by next Monday's meeting by checking with Ron Reed. It was also noted that they should add the following wording "located on River Street" and that it was requested by the Trust Fund Commissioners.

Paicos noted that *Article 19* had been reworded by Town Counsel. Dennehy stated that the intent of this article was to work with the anonymous donor and the Town to build a home thru Habitat, adding that the two parcels are shown as separate lots but they aren't. Paicos stated that they should have been conjoined and this needs to be fixed. Paicos noted that there is \$32k due in unpaid taxes, but Carlisle added that it may have been taxed as a buildable lot when in reality it isn't. Paicos stated that Town Meeting has the authority to gift the land. Dennehy added that they should remember the intent which is to convey a buildable lot to Habitat. Paicos stated that he would encourage Town Counsel to change the wording from "to sell" to "gift/donate" by amendment. He added that he suggests revising the current wording for more flexibility. Gagnon stated that he suggests they ask the voters if they want to gift the land. Carlisle noted that they should have Ed Vitone or Habitat come and give the whole explanation at the Special Town Meeting.

Paicos and the Board all agreed that *Article 20* was fine the way it was, except that Gagnon noted a typo on the spelling of Briggs which would be corrected.

Dennehy stated that with the exception of Articles 2, 5, 6, and 9 he asked for a motion to approve the warrant. Carlisle motioned to approve the warrant with the exceptions listed and Gagnon seconded. Motion carried.

Paicos noted that he would have another article to add authorizing tax anticipation borrowing in case the State is late with the Cherry Sheet payment to the Town. Paicos also noted that another article would need to be added to pay for any and all costs of the Town Hall staff move due to the renovation project to wherever it may be.

He went on to say that the cost estimate on the Town Hall project came in at \$800k over and noted that the committee would be able to cut out enough on the project to compensate for this shortfall. However, it was noted that there was not enough money to fund the temporary site for the staff and the committee was now transferring this problem to the Selectmen.

Paicos noted that the short list of options for the move would be the VMS building, the large meeting room at the Library and the Stevens building and added that these options would all require money be spent on electrical and phone etc. He added that the Committee doesn't want to delay the start of the project as every month of delay would cost us money, ½% per month. Paicos noted that he expects a combination of the options to house the staff.

Paicos noted that at least 2,200 square feet of space would be needed to house the staff. Gagnon stated that using \$50k as a point for discussion, would the money be wasted if improvements to these sites were done. Paicos noted that the VMS building should be torn down once we're finished using it so money spent there is not well spent. He added that the electrical work is not the big expense, but that energy cost is ridiculously high. Dennehy noted that they would have to make some decisions long-term on the VMS building. Gagnon noted that if \$50k is spent on the Stevens building, it's good money. Paicos added that money put in the VMS, low dollars are okay, but big dollars are not and that we are looking at big dollars to make it energy efficient. He also noted that a study on this building is needed but not until the fall at best as it would take 4-5 months.

Paicos noted that in two or three weeks he would have the pros and cons of where we can fit the staff and what would be needed. Bill Johnson noted that he thought it made sense to pay the rent at the Hardware Store property versus spending it to fix another site or two.

Dennehy stated that it would ultimately come down to picking the right path politically. He also noted that the numbers have to be the foundation point and then it would be made a lot clearer.

Carlisle made the motion to add the two additional articles requested by Paicos to the draft warrant and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Dennehy noted the Board's thanks to Gary Howland, the Council on Aging and Bill Johnson for their input, noting that a joint meeting with the Advisory Board would be coordinated for next Monday's meeting.

Dennehy stated that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen would be on Monday, January 8th and that the regular meeting would be on Tuesday, January 16th due to the Martin Luther King holiday on Monday, January 15th.

He noted the Special Town Meeting would be held on Wednesday, January 24th at 7:00 p.m. upstairs at Town Hall in the meeting room.

It was also noted that the Public Safety Building Committee would be meeting on Thursday, January 4th at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's meeting room.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:24 p.m., Carlisle motioned to enter into Executive Session to deliberate upon matters which, if done in open meeting could detrimentally affect the position of the Town regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, contract negotiations with non-union personnel and not to reconvene into open session. Gagnon seconded and the motion carried.

At 11:17 p.m., Carlisle motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Gagnon. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sylvia Turcotte
Assistant to the Town Administrator